

# Guatemala

## I. Indians & Half-Castes of Central America

By F. H. Hamilton

Writer and Traveller

**T**HE peoples of Central America, that narrow neck of land which lies between Mexico and South America, washed by the Pacific and Atlantic both, are commonly held to be less advanced in civilization than the other Spanish-Indian races. Nor is that common belief unjustified. "La gente mas bruto del mundo español," was how a Spanish critic described them to the writer, and the odd thing is that it is these peoples who have succeeded to two of the most advanced civilizations of the western hemisphere—those of the Aztecs and the Mayas.

In each of the five Central American Republics—Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Salvador—there is a very large proportion of Indians and half-breeds among the inhabitants, while in some there are a great many negroes. The number of "white" people is almost negligible. There is no really enlightened or organized public opinion.

That revolutions have been fewer in number of late is due to the refusal of Europe and the United States to find any more money either for loans to, or for enterprises in, the Spanish-American countries as long as they were so continually disturbed. The politicians now find they can do better by maintaining law and order.

### President Barrío's Statesmanlike Vision

It would be unfair, however, to deny that some among them are ambitious for the Republics as well as for themselves. In Guatemala, for example, an effort has been made to convince the people of the value and dignity of education. Every year in October the Festival of Minerva is celebrated. All schools take part in this; the parents of the boys and girls are invited also.

It was President Justo Rufino Barríos who gave his country the impetus towards education of which this festival is a lonely relic. He was a man of Indian origin, a native of the same valley on the border between Mexico and Guatemala as that in which Porfirio Diaz, the great Mexican President, was born. Himself uneducated until he had reached almost to man's estate, Barríos saw that the beginning of progress for the Republic must be the development of intelligence in the people. He established schools and made all parents whom he could reach send their children to be taught. He would not allow doctors to practise unless they were qualified. He came near to abolishing drunkenness, the curse of the natives, by wise regulation of the drink trade.

### Land of Perpetual Summer

When he drove the monks and nuns out of the country and cut down the powers which the Church had exercised for so long, he made an effort to introduce some form of Protestantism. He first invited the Church of England to send missionaries among his people. This invitation was declined, on account of the "disturbed state of the country." Then President Barríos made the acquaintance in the United States of a Presbyterian minister and encouraged him to start a mission; it never had much success. The law of Sunday rest, however, remained in force for a good while; its effect has not altogether disappeared yet.

The staple crop, coffee, requires a climate neither tropical nor mountainous; while bananas, rubber, and mahogany, other exports which have been gaining in importance for a number of years past, flourish only in the hot and swampy coast regions. The climate of the



**RIISING GENERATION OF GUATEMALA**

Children, dogs, chickens, and pigs form to a great extent the main "live stock" of every small Guatemalan village. The children are particularly sociable and cluster round the stranger, chattering and gesticulating like a flock of lively brown sparrows

high plateau which lies between the two oceans is pleasant and healthy. The weather is for the most part like that of a fine European summer.

The educated Guatemalan has courteous and agreeable manners; he is kindly and hospitable, and in appearance entirely European. His insistence upon shaking hands a great many times is at first apt to be rather disconcerting. He does this, not only at meeting and at parting, but also as an acknowledgment of polite inquiries after his health and that of his family, as congratulation if you say a good thing, as condolence in the event of your telling him bad

news. One soon grows accustomed to this, however—so accustomed that one finds it difficult to drop the habit when one comes away!

Years ago someone said of Guatemala City that it was oppressed by the memory of the disasters that befell the two capitals which went before it and apprehensive that some day it might be overwhelmed also; a catastrophe which came, sure enough, at Christmas, 1917, and laid a large part of the city in ruins, taking heavy toll of the hapless citizens. The first city built by the Spaniards in this neighbourhood was dedicated to "Saint James the Gentleman." Less than twenty years after it had been begun an appalling catastrophe wiped it out. For three days rain fell in torrents. On the fourth day there was a terrific wind, with thunder and lightning of alarming violence. In the night which followed the earth rocked so that it was impossible to stand. The terrified inhabitants rushed out of their

houses, only to be swept away by a flood of water, carrying with it sand and ashes, which came from one of the two volcanoes close by. This was in consequence named Agua (water), and in order to escape a repetition of its evil activity, the rebuilding of the city was started three miles away.

In the course of nearly two and a half centuries Antigua Guatemala had become the chief centre of learning, wealth, religion, and the arts in the whole of Spanish America. Then its doom fell upon it. There was a convulsion below the surface of the earth; instead of bursting into eruption the volcano

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shuddered with awful violence; the earth quaked, and the second Guatemala City lay ruined. There the massive blocks of stone, the pillars and arches of its fifty churches, remain for visitors to marvel at; there can be seen the convents and monasteries attached to them, some with cells for as many as five hundred women or men. The surroundings are of delicious beauty, and the place is still inhabited. If one asked inhabitants whether they were not afraid to live so near the volcano, they replied: "Oh, no, señor, it has been blessed by a priest! There is no harm in it now." The writer has not had an opportunity of gathering their opinions on the efficacy of the blessing since the fatal Christmastide of 1917; but no doubt the matter of that earthquake has been satisfactorily explained to the intelligence of the Guatemaltecos.

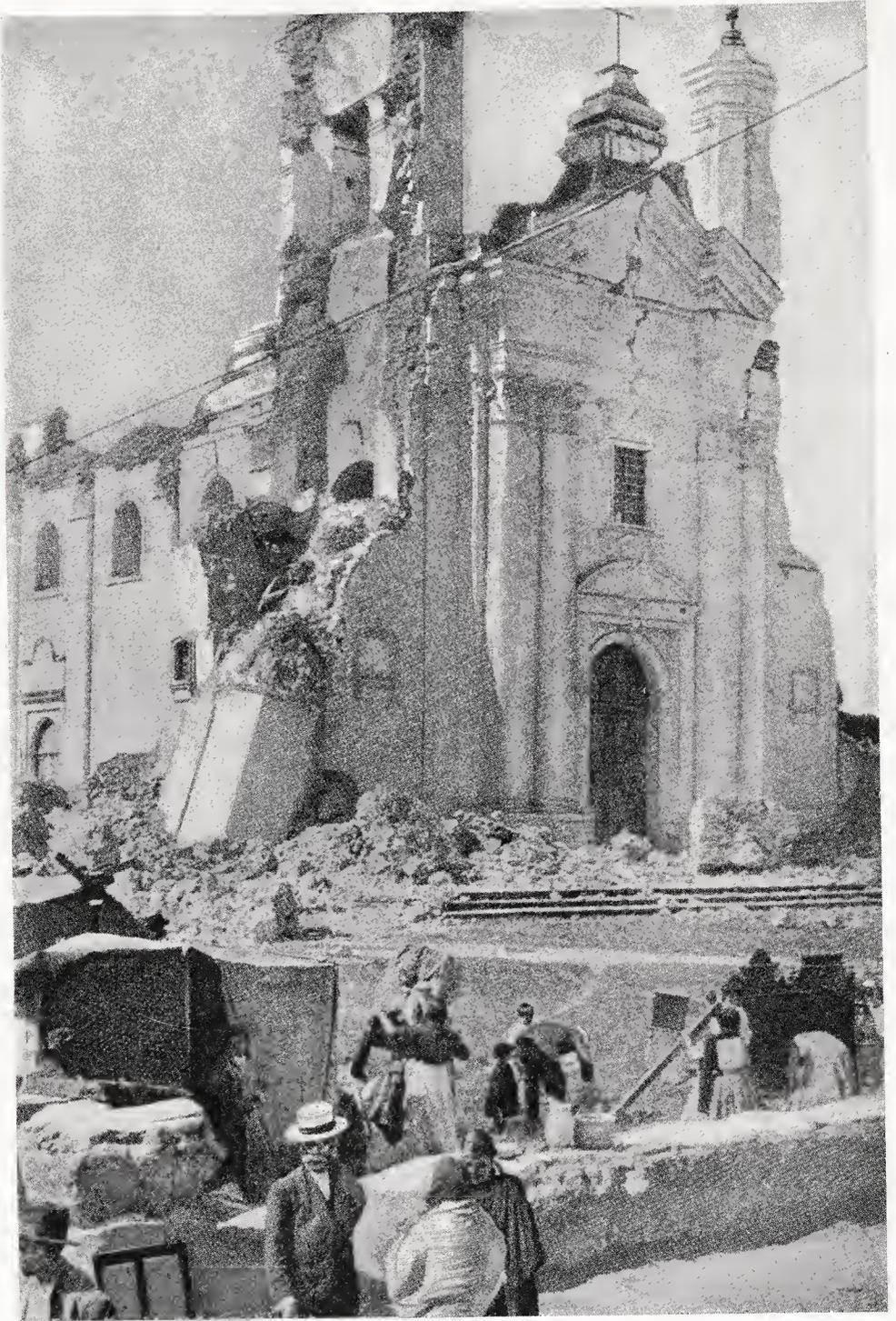
The city is well worth a visit, if only for the sake of the journeys up to it from the Atlantic and down from it to the Pacific on the principal railway of the Republic. Starting from Puerto Barríos, a new port which already does a brisk trade in fruit, timber, and rubber, the train climbs first through tropical forests and jungle, then among waving palms and orange groves, and so into a highland region of pines and firs. The capital is reached in twelve hours or so.

On the way down towards the Pacific the line runs through fields of sugar-cane; the traveller's eye is delighted by masses of magnolia bloom and every kind of cactus; and if he is lucky, he will see alligators sunning themselves on the river banks. At the stations Indians surround the carriage windows, offering fruit, eggs, and sometimes cooked chickens at ridiculously small prices. Land which has been cleared and



SHADY CORNER FOR THE MARKETING OF INDIAN WARES

There are many "early birds" among the Indian population of Guatemala, who, with the dawn, make their appearance in the towns laden with marketable goods, and ply their trade in pottery, fresh fruits, vegetables, and sweetmeats. Bargaining is a recognized feature of each sale, and as there are no fixed prices, goods may often be secured for less than half the figure demanded



### STRICKEN CITY OF GUATEMALA DURING A VOLCANIC VISITATION

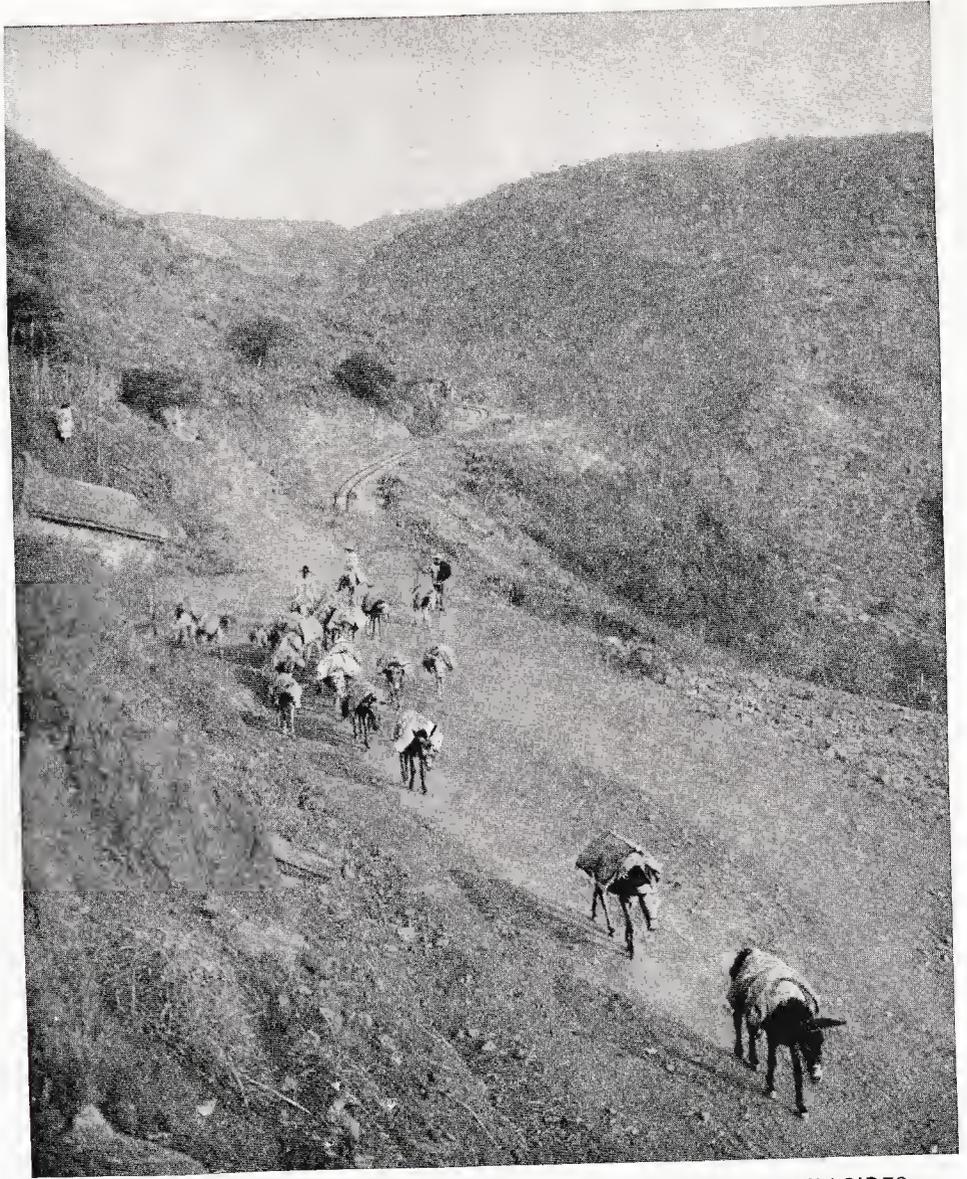
The third City of Guatemala grew up on a site held to be immune from earthquakes, and in splendour and size far exceeded the former capitals. The Church of the Recolección, seen above, was partially ruined in December, 1917, but the final and most terrific shock of Jan. 3, 1918, completed the work of destruction, and the twin towers and the massive pediment between crumbled into a heap of debris

*Photo, American Field Museum of Chicago*



**RUINS IN ANTIGUA GUATEMALA THAT ATTEST ITS FORMER SPLENDOUR**  
Three times, and each time in a different location, has the capital of Guatemala been devastated by earthquakes. The second city flourished for more than two hundred years, but was completely ruined by the earthquake shocks of 1773. Many of the survivors refused to leave their shattered homes, and under the name of Antigua Guatemala the place has been inhabited down to the present time

*Photo, Percy F. Martin*



#### MULE TRAIN TOILING OVER THE RUGGED GUATEMALAN HILLSIDES

Sound animals are scarce and expensive in Guatemala, but the mule, no matter what his condition, is invaluable as the pack-animal of the traveller, for this wise beast can scramble up the rough hillsides, or slide down the perilously steep and slippery mountain-paths with remarkable surefootedness. In the rear of the long mule trains are the muleteers, or arrieros, their loud, harsh voices awakening echoes in the silent valleys

planted with cacao, used for making chocolate and cocoa, may be noticed here and there ; this is a new industry, and one which promises excellent results.

For a long time the cochineal insect was a source of wealth to Guatemala. This feeds on the nopal cacti, and when the leaves have been dried the tiny creatures can be scraped off. They are

then either baked or boiled, to make either blue or red dye ; but aniline dyes soon supplanted all others, and now cochineal dyes are used only by the Indians. The fibre sashes which the women wear on their tight skirts of cotton are of a brilliant scarlet ; their blouses, their only upper garment, worn next to the skin, are embroidered with

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crimson and purple thread. They make their whole costume themselves, unless they live near a town. Even their sandals are of home manufacture.

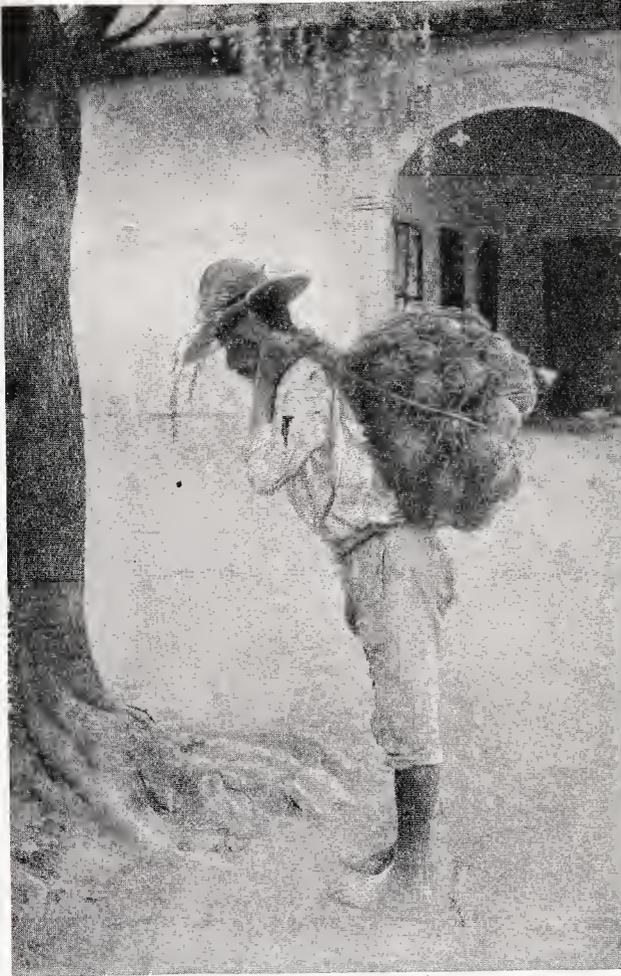
Very pretty and graceful the young women look, with their hair in braids and their lissom figures, and their dark faces lit up by modest, friendly smiles.

Beauty in girls is highly prized, whether they are white or half-white or Indian. Photographers thrive not only upon vanity but upon the sale of their portraits of good-looking women. The Spanish women spoil their faces by the amount of thick powder and other "aids to beauty" which they plaster on to them. Americans



### LUSCIOUS FRUITS FOR THE HOT AND THIRSTY

In Guatemala there is a continual movement of vegetable and fruit carriers to and fro between the villages and towns. The produce of the former are brought, mainly by Indians, to the markets in light wooden crates called "cacastes." These are either borne by hand or pannier-wise on the patient backs of donkeys or mules, and a lively trade is done.



WHERE MUSCULAR STRENGTH IS TESTED

Vegetables, fruits, and other village produce are chiefly borne to the townfolk on the sturdy backs of the Indian carriers, the weight of the often heavy load being distributed by a broad band passed round their foreheads

make a joke of it, saying that if you kiss one you risk lead poisoning. A Swiss lady who kept a school for the girls of the "best families" in Guatemala City tried hard to break her pupils of this disfiguring habit. No boarders were allowed to have any "make-up" in their possession, and the principal used to wait outside in the morning with a basin of water, a sponge, and a towel to clean up the girls who came by the day.

The Indians are surprisingly strong, women as well as men. They can keep up a pace of six miles an hour, and it is common enough to see a mother with a

baby tied round her hips and a heavy load on her head stepping out briskly and feeling no fatigue at all. The men carry their loads on the back in a basket, with a band round their foreheads to distribute the weight. They are so used to a burden that often when they return home with empty baskets they will put stones in to make them feel properly balanced. All that they wear as a rule is a pair of scanty trousers, more like short drawers. The nearest that President Barrios ever came to provoking a revolution was when he issued orders that everyone should wear what he considered to be "proper clothes."

In general, the Indians, who make up more than half of the two million population, are an honest, hard-working, orderly folk, contented with very little in the way of food and household possessions. Their looks are melancholy; they do not seem to have forgotten the hideous cruelties of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. Yet they are

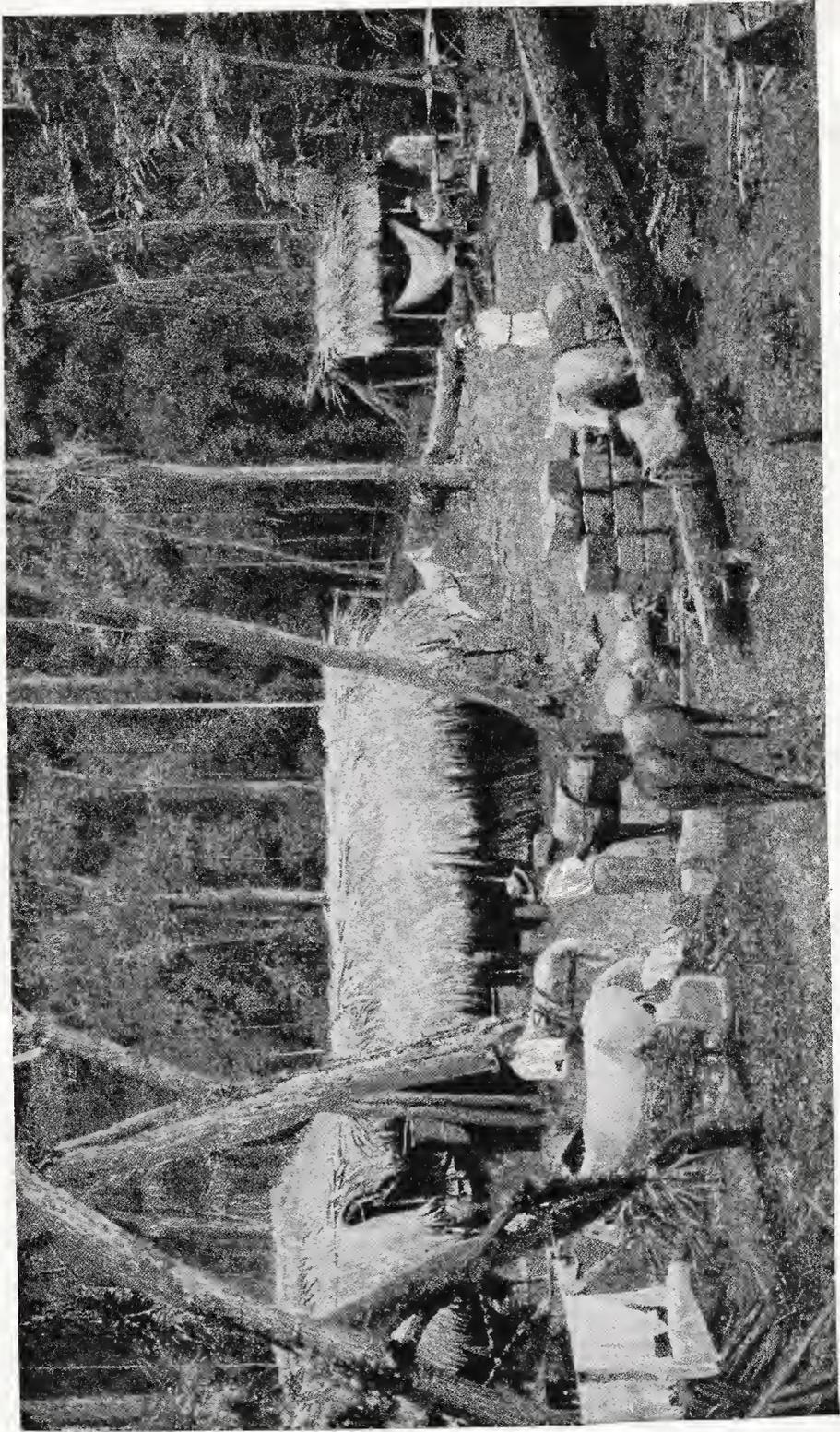
fond of excitement and love noise. They celebrate the festivals of the Roman Catholic Church with enthusiasm, and always end up with a display of fireworks.

The study of the native races of Guatemala is in part the study of Mexico and Yucatan, as the chief aboriginal tribes and the national cultures were common to the territories named. But the subject is a complicated and a highly-specialised one when we range beyond the three main nations of the Aztecs, the Toltecs, and the Mayas, the last-named being in many respects the



GUATEMALAN WOMAN WITH AVOCADOS OR ALLIGATOR PEARS

Although the upper classes of Guatemala come within the influence of foreign fashions, the humbler folk remain true to their native dress, which, as far as the women are concerned, is often very attractive with its bright colours and embroidery on blouse or vest. The country abounds in tropical fruits and flowers, many specimens of the former being unknown in the more northerly countries of America



**CHICLE-GUM COLLECTORS CAMPED IN THE TROPICAL FOREST OF GUATEMALA**

An increasingly important source of revenue to Guatemala is the gum resin of the naseberry tree, achras sapota, from which the chicle or chewing-gum, so popular in the United States, is mostly made. The tree, somewhat similar to the indiarubber tree, exudes a milky sap during the rainy season, and this is collected by workers, known as chicle-beeders who live in camps in the bush, oxidised, melted in a crude oven, and made up into bales for export. The chicic camps, erected

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most interesting for their curious resemblances to the ancient Egyptians in certain of their customs. There are numerous tribal differences among the Guatemalans of to-day, and although the whole of the Indians may be regarded as in a state of degeneracy contrasted with that of their ancient vigour and achievement, it is possible to trace among them some of the outstanding characteristics of the powerful tribes of the past, such as the Quichés and the Cachiuels, the two dominant native races at the time of Alvarado's conquest of the country.

Since the Spanish conquest there has been no very noticeable fusion among the aborigines, although each of the great native cultures has completely passed away, the natives of to-day being, on the whole, a spiritless people who provoke no great curiosity as to their origins, while the intermingling of Spanish, Indian, and negro blood has produced a great variety of types, to each of which a distinguishing name is given.

### Illuminating Glimpses of the Indians

While much has been written about the ancient cultures of Mexico and Yucatan, little attention has been given to the Guatemalan, possibly because of its close relationship to these others. Indeed, the life of Guatemala has exercised the attention of very few investigators; but there is the notable exception of the work by Mrs. and Mr. A. P. Maudslay, entitled "A Glimpse at Guatemala," in which these able archaeologists give a most interesting record of their experiences in the country, and offer what is probably the best study of its past history and present-day life that has appeared in the English language. Although their expedition was archæological in its purpose, both Mr. and Mrs. Maudslay had an observant eye for the life of the people, and their admirable work records many lively incidents. From Mrs. Maudslay's description of Santo Tomas we take the following vivid picture of a scene which will serve to show how the Indians still contrive to retain some of their ancient superstitions even though they are

nominally within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church.

"Santo Tomas boasts of no inn, but we found something to eat at a dirty little house, where we were attended to by an old crone, who spoke no language intelligible to us. After breakfast we strolled into the picturesque plaza, bright with the gala costumes of the Indians. The women wore heavy chains of beads and coins round their necks, and were clothed in the most elaborately embroidered huipils we had as yet seen. Almost every man carried a blue or brown-striped rug on his shoulder, and some queerly-dressed old men wandered amongst the crowd, with distaff in hand, spinning woollen thread.

### Native Indifference to Indian Customs

"A grand fiesta was in progress in the church—probably a preparation for 'Candelaria,' which falls on February 2—to which, as usual, the Ladinos appeared to be supremely indifferent; indeed, they never seem to trouble themselves about the customs of the race so nearly allied to them, and look down on the Indians as inferiors, only fit to be human beasts of burden. It is useless to ask them what an Indian ceremony may mean; the only answer one gets is, 'No se, señora, es costumbre de los Indios.' Even Gorgonio, whom I delight to look upon as an exception to the rule, on this occasion showed no desire to enlighten my curiosity, so we mounted the steps and entered the great bare church to learn as much as we could for ourselves.

### Praying Round a Cross of Flowers

"At the top of the stone steps in front of the open church-door a large pile of wood-ashes smouldered and flickered faintly in the sunlight; the man who tended this fire every now and then threw on the embers small pieces of copal, which scented the air with its heavy perfumed smoke, while around the fire groups of women knelt to pray before entering the building. We found the interior to be charmingly decorated with flowers. The floor had first been strewn with fragrant pine-needles, and



**GUATEMALA INDIAN VILLAGERS PLACIDLY CONTENT IN THEIR THATCHED HUTS AND LINHAYS**  
An Indian village is a harmony in brown; the small, square, brown houses with brown thatch, nestle comfortably on dull brown earth-banks, or are poised securely on hard brown rocks; the striped huipils, or cotton blouses, of the women, and the coloured handkerchiefs bound round the heads of the men standing out in pleasing contrast to the tawny background. The houses are usually built of rough stones, held together by a framework of sticks, and thatched with grass

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on this carpet the flowers were arranged in the shape of a huge cross, extending almost the whole length of the church. In some parts the lines were traced in green and coloured leaves, and filled up with scattered rose-petals; in others with clusters of all the flowers that could be found in bloom, edged with little groups of lighted candles. Picturesquely dressed Indians, singly or in couples, were dragging themselves on their knees the whole length of the cross, stopping at intervals to repeat prayers. No priest officiated, and none but Indians were in the least interested in the service, if such it could be called.

"As we were leaving the church we stopped to watch a funeral procession coming across the plaza. The men ascended the church steps, carrying the ugly black catafalque on their shoulders, but to our surprise, instead of entering the church with their burden they turned the catafalque round three times in front of the fire where the copal was burning, fired off a rocket, and then went away again. While this ceremony was being rapidly performed the friends and relations of the dead man stood some distance away in the plaza crying and weeping loudly."

### Universal Use of Rockets

To Mrs. Maudslay we are also indebted for a note on another Guatemalan characteristic which is probably more marked in the Spanish countries of Central America than in the Southern continent. "To anyone not already used to the ways of the Spanish peasantry one of the first things that strikes one as curious in Central America is this constant firing of rockets in the daytime. No ceremony is complete until the swish and report of a rocket have been heard. The pilgrim when he reaches his native village fires a rocket to announce his arrival. It is the expression of joy at a fiesta, and it is the last rite necessary for the repose of the dead."

Another glimpse of the queer customs obtaining in some of the Indian towns is given in Mrs. Maudslay's account of a visit to San Antonio on the shores of Lake Atitlán. "After arranging our

camp-beds," she writes, "and ordering our supper from the *estanco*, we stroll about the town to see the sights. While we were enjoying the lovely view and watching the changing lights upon the water, a procession of Indians, clad in their black, sack-like garments, came towards us. It was headed by the *alcalde* with his staff of office, who was followed by his *alguacils* and *mayores*, each carrying a long white stick.

### Crying the Orders for the Week

"They stopped at house after house, apparently giving some directions to the inmates, and as they passed us the *alcalde* civilly wished us '*buenas noches*'; then a little farther on they halted, and an *alguacil*, clambering up a wall, stood on the top, and in a loud, clear voice, which seemed to travel up the hillsides, called out the instructions for the work to be put in hand on the morrow, and repeated the municipal orders for the week. After a moment's pause he was answered by a voice far away in the distance, then by another in an opposite quarter of the town, and when all was quiet again the Indians ceremoniously bade one another good-night, and the procession dispersed. This, we learnt, is the usual custom on a Sunday night, and in the stillness of the fading daylight it was a curious and impressive ceremony."

Yet another impression of Indian life from the same graphic pen touches the religious observances of the Indians, and it may be allowed to stand without comment as an example of their "progress" from the medieval ages in which they lived their own national and municipal life with a primitive religious and social system which had served them not inefficiently until the coming of the Spaniard:

### When the Indian Pilgrims Come Home

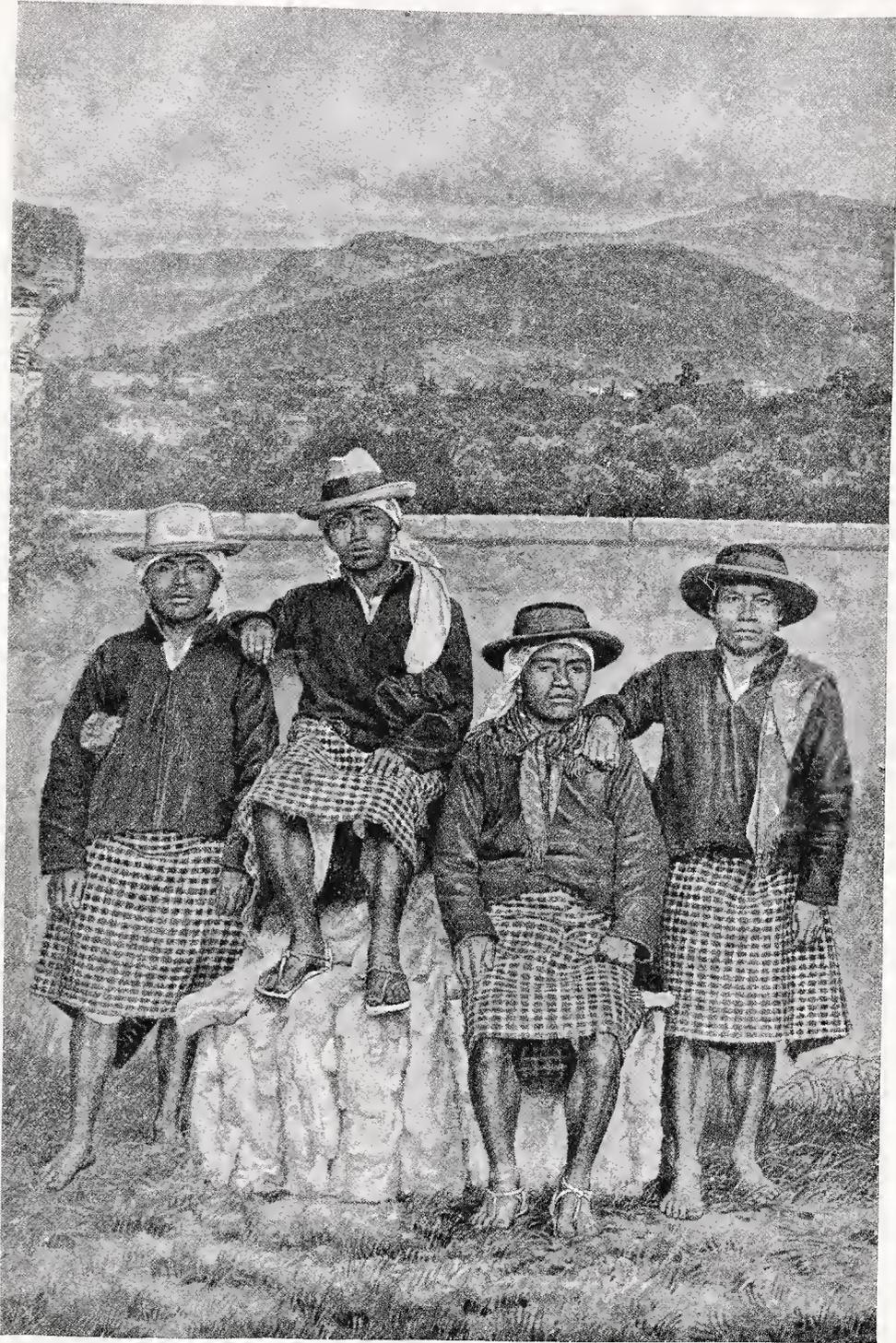
"While we were at Panajachél, a matter of especial interest presented itself to us in the curious ceremonies of the Indian pilgrims returning from Esquipulas. Our room looked out on the plaza, which in the morning always afforded a few picturesque groups of



#### MYSTERY MONOLITH OF THE PRIMEVAL FORESTS OF QUIRIGUA

This remarkable carved obelisk was discovered among the ancient ruins of Quirigua, together with many other monuments of great architectural merit, the origin of which is still shrouded in mystery. The sides of the monoliths, which number over a dozen, are covered with hieroglyphs and picture-writings, a complete deciphering of which would solve many great problems of Maya civilization

*Photo, Alfred P. Maudslay*



#### DUSKY DESCENDANTS OF THE ANCIENT MAYA STOCK

The Indians of Guatemala comprise many interesting types, and their costumes and several of their customs vary considerably in the different villages. For the most part, they are a religious people and participate in their numerous Church festivals with whole-hearted devotion; the ritual and formality attending the functions of the Church of Rome having become almost a part of their daily life

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market women, but was almost deserted by noon; then, as evening approached, little companies of pilgrims, bending under their burdens, filed into the town, and as night fell the plaza was lit up by numerous small fires, around which the pilgrims gathered for their supper. This important meal ended, they began their religious functions by laying down petates (mats) in front of the cacastes which had already been arranged in a line across the plaza. Then each man produced from his cargo a small wooden box, usually glazed on one side, containing the image of a saint, and these were arranged in a row against the cacastes, between lighted candles, the place of honour in the middle being assigned to a box containing a figure of the Black Christ.

### Evening Service in the Market Place

"When these arrangements were completed, the Indians, who were dressed in long black woollen garments, with long white veils fastened to their black straw hats, prostrated themselves in turn before each shrine, and crawled along from one to the other on hands and knees, laying the forehead in the dust, offering up their prayers to each saint, and kissing the box which contained its image. These acts of devotion were several times repeated, and then grouping themselves on their knees before the shrine of the Black Christ, and led by one of their number, who seemed to have some sort of authority over them, they all chanted the quaint hymn we had so often heard in the early watches of the morning. After singing for nearly half an hour they withdrew to their fires, rolled themselves in their blankets, and were soon fast asleep."

### Spanish Destruction of Indian Civilization

In beautifying life and making it casier the Spaniards have taught the natives relatively little. Before the conquest the Central American Indians had worked up to a high pitch of civilization. Their arts and crafts were marked by taste as well as skill, showing some affinity with those of the Chinese

to whom the original Guatemalans are in some degree related. They practised a religion based on the teaching of a sacred book, which gave an account of the Creation not unlike that which is contained in the first chapter of Genesis. All their beliefs, arts, industries were swept away by the invaders. If the story of what the Spaniards did had not been told by one of themselves, the Dominican monk, Las Casas, who did not share the current delusion that God had put the Indians there for the white men to torture and kill, it would be scarcely possible to persuade oneself that such barbarities could have been committed.

When Guatemala declared itself free and independent in 1821, it abolished slavery at once. For a time it seemed to be on the way to develop upon gradual democratic lines. The priests, however, soon stirred up trouble, as they did in Mexico, with which country Guatemala was for a short time united. In 1844 a Liberal president was driven from office by a savage, ignorant Indian, Rafael Carrera, who persuaded people that he was the Angel Raphael, and who ruled them for nearly a quarter of a century by cruel and despotic methods. Thus from the very start of independence the energy which should have been put into educating the nation and giving it sound institutions was spent on struggling for power by means of civil war.

### German Influence in Guatemala

Up to the beginning of the twentieth century the United Kingdom did more trade with the Guatemalans than any other country. Since then the United States have taken first place, and until 1914 the Germans were ahead of the English by a good deal. Although the educated Guatemalan likes to be thought Parisian in his appearance and way of living, he admires German thoroughness and industry. The army was trained by German officers on German lines, and compulsory service was introduced after the German model, that is to say, service which is compulsory upon the poor, but from which the rich can manage

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to escape, in the last resort, by buying themselves off. The Guatemala coffee fincas were mostly owned by Germans before the Great War, and still remain largely in their hands.

Cultivation is easy and crops are abundant, if they are sensibly chosen. There is one enemy of the cultivator, though, which will have to be got under, that is the ant. In columns from three to four yards wide masses of ants travel through the country, destroying all that lies in their way. The only consolation the farmer has, after they have passed and left his season's work ruined, is that they destroy all other pests. At their approach cockroaches rush about in terror, seeking to hide from them. They exterminate centipedes and even scorpions.

Spiders show ingenuity in escaping the ants. There is one species which has eight rather long legs. It keeps its body above the ants by balancing, now on five legs, now on four, sometimes on three, picking them up as the ants come near them, doing a kind of dance in which it can frequently find safety. Green-leaf locusts roll themselves up and let the ants pass over them as if they were really leaves.

To meet an ant-drive is an interesting incident of travel in Guatemala. There is magnificent scenery, too, to make the way pleasant, and the ruins of Antigua Guatemala are full of interest for the searcher into the glories of the past. But in general, travelling in Guatemala, except by rail, is not to be recommended for pleasure. The roads, excepting those round the capital, are all

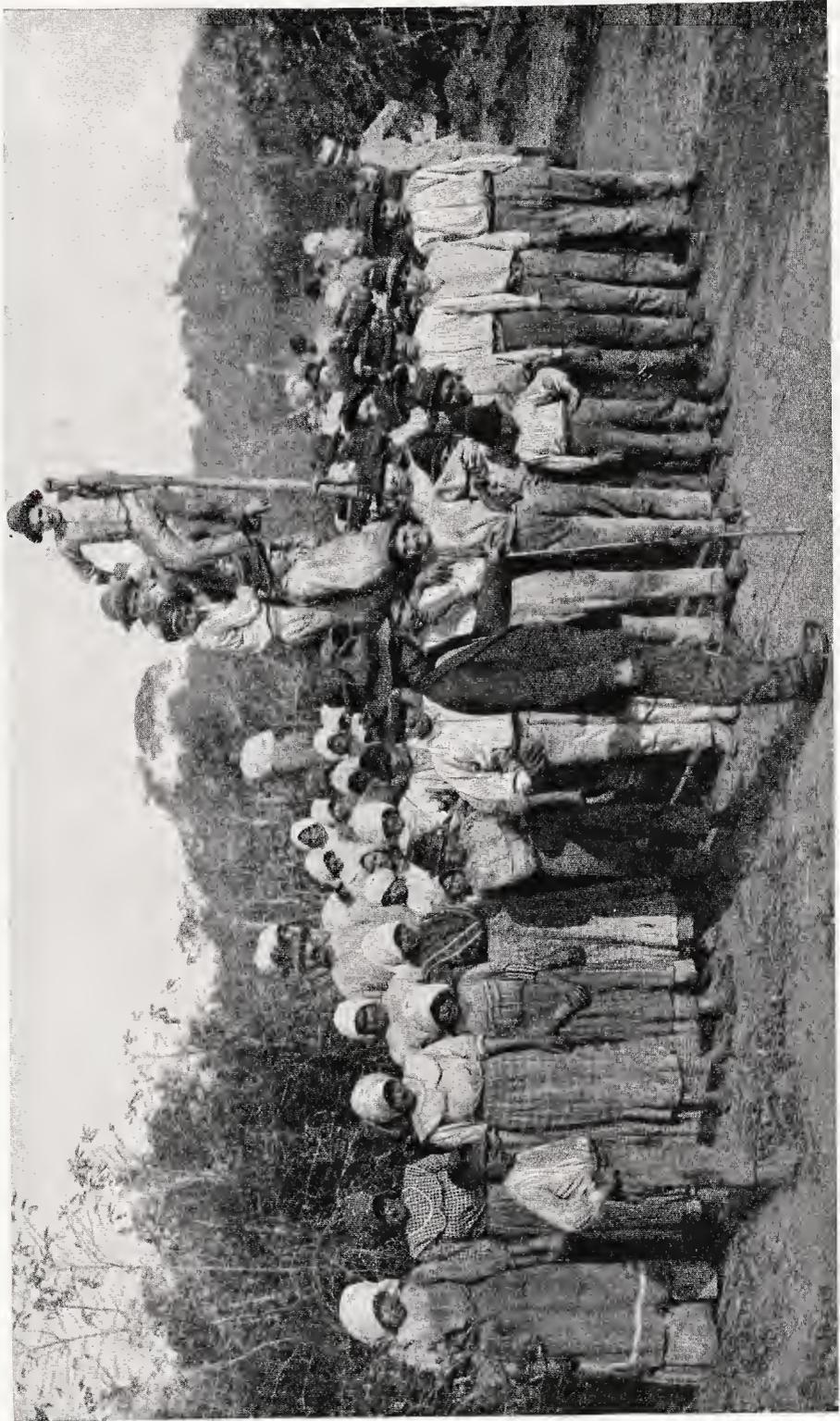


MIXCAN BEAUTY AMID THE PALMS.

This girl, with her loose-sleeved embroidered dress, hails from Mixco, a small town some eight miles from what was Guatemala city. Here the traveller finds steep paved streets with rough native houses climbing up the hill, and the inhabitants largely gained their living as bakers, washerwomen, and purveyors to the capital that perished in the earthquake of 1917-18

bad. Mule coaches of ancient pattern are the vehicles used.

Considerable attention has been given to the railways of this part of Central America, and in 1912 the International Railway of that name was incorporated, representing a consolidation of the Guatemala Railway, 195 miles, the Occidental Railway, 51 miles, the Ocos Railway, 22 miles, and the Guatemala Central Railway, 139 miles. This company received subsidies from the Governments both of Salvador and Guatemala, and the latter may purchase the lines at a price to be decided by arbitration after the year 2002.



**MERRY GROUP OF COFFEE-PICKERS DURING A PAUSE IN THEIR WORK**  
Coffee is one of Guatemala's leading products, and trees and bushes of this plant, that yields a fragrant drink for thousands all over the globe, are a decided feature of the landscape with their bright red berries. The crop is often gathered by Indians who may be seen at their work laughing and singing, as who would not in this pleasant clime? Above is a gathering of cheerful workers who were evidently quite agreeable to having their photographs taken. Some of the smaller members who were unable to get into the front rank continued a column of portraits above their absent heads.

# Guatemala

## II. Its Spanish Rulers & Later Dictators

By Percy F. Martin, F.R.G.S.

Author of "El Salvador," etc.

WITH a superficial area of 48,290 square miles Guatemala is among the most mountainous of the Central American States, its highest ranges reaching to 7,000 feet above sea-level. Among its bristling array of volcanoes, Fuégo (fire), with a disastrous record of eruptions, stands 12,577 feet, while the neighbouring crater, Agua (water), destroyed the earliest Spanish capital of Guatemala (1541), and contributed again in several subsequent eruptions (1863, 1874, and 1917) to demolish the capital.

The climate of Guatemala differs little from that of the neighbouring States, being almost fully tropical; which is equivalent to saying that it is warm and generally healthy except on the coast, where it is malarial. There are, however, temperate and cool zones, while in the uplands snow occasionally falls. As its Indian name signifies—"a land covered with trees"—Guatemala is thickly wooded, possessing a rich flora and fauna. Much of the country's natural wealth exists in its as yet untouched forests, abounding in mahogany, estimated to cover an area of 1,300,000 acres. A belt of country extending from the coast-range of mountains on the western frontier, near the Pacific, across the Sierra Madre to the coast-range of the Caribbean slope, comprises a highly-mineralised territory which might, one day, yield valuable treasure in metals.

When, in 1522, Pedro de Alvarado, the Spanish adventurer and lieutenant of Hernando Cortés, at the age of twenty-seven, landed in Guatemala, he had already had some experience of dealing with the natives of Yucután (Mexico), whom he had massacred or cruelly enslaved. Thus he was quite ready to deal with the equally fierce and untractable Guatemalans, especially as he had been provided by his chief with an ample

force. Merciless severity finally subdued opposition, and Spanish administration, introduced with little further difficulty, was forcibly maintained for nearly three hundred years. In 1821 the general revolt of the Spanish dominions against the Crown, then worn by Ferdinand VII., freed Guatemala, among other Latin-American Crown Colonies, from its long-endured servitude.

What is now known as "Guatemala" forms but a very small part of the original colony bearing that name, which, under the Spanish dominion, stretched over nearly two-thirds of South America. Upon breaking loose from Spain, Guatemala formed one of the Central American countries, then joined in a Federal Union; but this combination did not last very long. Breaking up in 1827 into independent Republics, Guatemala, like its neighbours, chose its own executive: the earliest proved members of a long line of tyrants or dictators—sometimes both—who succeeded in keeping the country in a state of continual war, both internecine and with its neighbours. The first constitution (1822) was discarded, being replaced by a second in 1845, and by a third in 1851, while amendments and alterations to the adopted enactment have since taken place at various periods (1885, 1887, and 1889).

The President whose rule endured the longest was Rafael Carrera. Elected in

1840, he succeeded in forcibly maintaining his position as life executive, or dictator, ruling until 1865, just a few years longer than Estrada Cabrera, of whom more later. The next significant administration was brought about by the triumph of the Liberal Party (which had played a very active rôle in Guatemalan political history) and the expulsion of the Jesuits from the country. Successive presidents, notably General Justo Rufino Barrios,



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followed in the same direction, the Church being disestablished during his period of office (1873-85), which ended only with his death on the battlefield.

A veritable stormy petrel, Barrios endeavoured unsuccessfully to bring about a combination of the five Central American States of which he was to be supreme head; and, in order to convert others to his way of thinking, he invaded Salvador but was compelled to defend his own frontiers against Nicaragua and Costa Rica. He was succeeded in 1886 by General Manuel Barillas, who established much-desired peace between the conflicting States. His successor, General José María Reina Barrios, elected in 1892 and again in 1897, was assassinated February 8, 1898, and Manuel Estrada Cabrera was elected (September 9) Acting-President.

### Peaceful Penetration by Germany

At this time German influence commenced to make itself felt in Guatemala, as it had already done in Nicaragua and Salvador. A large number of agricultural and banking concessions fell into Teutonic hands, and prospered apace. A certain Herr Kilhauer was granted a concession to establish an agricultural bank which proved the forerunner of a number of other affiliated monetary and mortgage institutions. Some exist under different names to-day.

During the war in 1906 between Guatemala and Salvador, the troops of the former State were charged with crimes similar to those alleged by the Allies against certain German and Austrian officers during the Great War—that is with having killed their Honduran prisoners as soon as they were captured. All the Central American States subscribed—as did Germany—to the Hague Convention of 1899, so that this barbarous act created intense hostility and evoked speedy reprisals. Later on in the same year (July 20), the three States of Honduras, Guatemala, and Salvador signed the six articles of what is known as the "Marblehead" Pact (arranged on board the United States warship of that name).

### Successive Plots and Counter Plots

Fresh internal discontent then commenced to assert itself; the stern rule of Provisional-President Estrada Cabrera created a number of enemies among the landed classes, and the flight of a number of influential political opponents to the safe refuge afforded in the United States and Mexico enabled them to maintain a vigorous crusade against the authority of the Executive. Plots were hatched and guided by prominent Guatemalans such as Dr. France, General M. S. Barillas,

Emilio de León, J. Ramón Calena, etc., and the Cabrera régime found itself assailed in many different directions.

In August, 1907, there was a serious attempt to assassinate the President by means of a mine, laid in the street (no more than 120 feet from the American Legation) along which the chief magistrate was accustomed to take his morning drive. Although Cabrera escaped, his Chief-of-Army, General Orellana, was wounded. Nineteen persons supposed to have been concerned in the plot, including members of some of the best families, were executed, notwithstanding strong personal appeals made to the President for clemency by the British Minister, Sir Lionel Carden, and other foreign diplomats.

A few months before, General Barillas, while in Mexico City, had been assassinated. Of this crime President Estrada Cabrera was declared to have been the instigator, just as, later on, he was suspected of having been the cause of the assassination of Manuel Enrique Araujo, President of Salvador (April, 1913), while two other Guatemalans, General José María Lima and Colonel Orofio Bone, were publicly accused of carrying out the deed. As a consequence, diplomatic relations between Mexico and Guatemala were severed, the usual petty indignities to each other's flags being perpetrated. An even greater danger threatened the poorer classes of the people, by reason of a serious famine, which the poverty of the Government could do little to alleviate. At the end of 1908, virulent smallpox also broke out, and soon assumed alarming proportions, the death-rate proving exceptionally heavy.

### International Relations and Finance

The frequent quarrels between Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, and Nicaragua again came to a head that year (1908), when the Central American Peace Court, sitting at Cartágo, Costa Rica, was established for the purpose of settling those and other disputes. The court was afterwards made permanent, the late Andrew Carnegie having contributed a sum of \$100,000 (£20,000) towards the provision of a suitable building, which, however, was subsequently destroyed by an earthquake.

In February, 1910, the boundary convention concluded between Guatemala and Honduras (March 1, 1895) was extended for a further period of two years, while on December 8, 1911, it was again prolonged until March 1, 1914.

Elected full Constitutional President for the first time, March, 1911, Estrada Cabrera (who in previous years had himself been an active revolutionary, working from New Orleans), in violation of the constitutional law, retained after

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his term had expired the executive chair year after year by organizing his own re-election. He ruled until March, 1920, when he was forcibly deposed, imprisoned, and succeeded, as Provisional President, by Carlos Herrera.

Notwithstanding the virtual reign of terror that had endured during Cabrera's long and oppressive rule, he undoubtedly effected much for the cause of education, up till then greatly neglected; he increased the number of schools in one year by 250, and their complement of pupils by 7,020.

In the summer of 1911 an attempt was made by an American financial coterie, known as the "American Mining and Development Syndicate" (headed by Mr. A. E. Spriggs), to obtain control of the entire economic resources of the Republic. This effort, encouraged by the Executive and a complacent Congress, would no doubt have succeeded but for the energetic protests of other countries, particularly the United States, whose Government strongly disapproved of the project, which *inter alia* comprised exclusive rights to all the waterways, railways, telegraphs, and telephones in Guatemala in return for the "promise" of ten per cent. of the profits earned.

In 1912 the British Government, after exemplary patience, decided to compel Guatemala to settle her long-standing indebtedness; thanks to the devoted services and unflinching tact of Sir Lionel E. G. Carden (H.B.M. Minister to Guatemala and other Central American States), an agreement was brought about, but nothing was actually paid. Guatemala's foreign indebtedness at this time (default had existed for over thirteen

years) amounted to £1,482,800, without arrears of unpaid interest.

In May, 1913, therefore, the British cruiser *Aeolus* was sent to Puerto Barrios (Guatemala) to support the British Minister in his efforts to obtain a definite preliminary payment upon the Guatemalan Four per Cent. External Debt. In the month of June a satisfactory agreement was entered into, and the first actual payment was made, while subsequent remittances from time to time have been unflinching received, sometimes before actually due. To-day, with accumulated interest, and allowing for the amount that has since been redeemed, the debt stands at £1,940,643.

Towards the end of December, 1917, Guatemala City was visited by a series of earthquake shocks which, continuing throughout January, 1918, caused a large number of deaths and serious damage to property, over 125,000 people being rendered homeless.

After the deposition, April 14, 1920, of President Cabrera, new elections took place (August), when Carlos Herrera, Provisional President of the Republic, was confirmed in the Executive Chair by a large majority of votes to serve for the customary term of four years. But in March, 1922, he was succeeded by General José María Orellana.

Guatemala, Salvador, and Honduras agreed, on September 15, 1921, to form a Central American Federation. By its constitution, Tegucigalpa was to be the capital, there were to be two legislative chambers, and the Federal Council was to be inaugurated on February 1, 1922. But Guatemala and Salvador withdrew.

## GUATEMALA: FACTS AND FIGURES

### The Country

In Central America, Guatemala lies south and east of Mexico, and is bounded south by the Pacific, east by British Honduras, the Gulf of Honduras, Salvador, and Honduras. Area about 48,290 square miles. Population estimated at 2,003,580, about 60 per cent. pure Indians.

### Government and Constitution

Republic under constitution of 1879, modified 1885, 1887, 1889, 1903, by which legislative power is vested in National Assembly and Council of State. Members of the Assembly, one for every 20,000 inhabitants, are elected for four years under universal suffrage. Council of State consists of thirteen members elected by the Assembly or appointed by the President. President is elected for six years.

### Defence

Military service compulsory between the ages of eighteen and fifty. Army when mobilised numbers about 85,500 officers and men; reserve, 40,500.

### Commerce and Industries

Soil fertile. Chief crops are coffee and sugar. Rice, maize, bananas, beans, wheat, and potatoes

also grown. Important trade in mahogany, dye-woods, and gum; cattle breeding extensive; mining little developed. Total imports (cotton, foodstuffs, linen, hemp, jute, paper, corn, steel, leather) in 1920, £2,908,940; exports (coffee, rubber, timber, hides, bananas, sugar), £3,720,581.

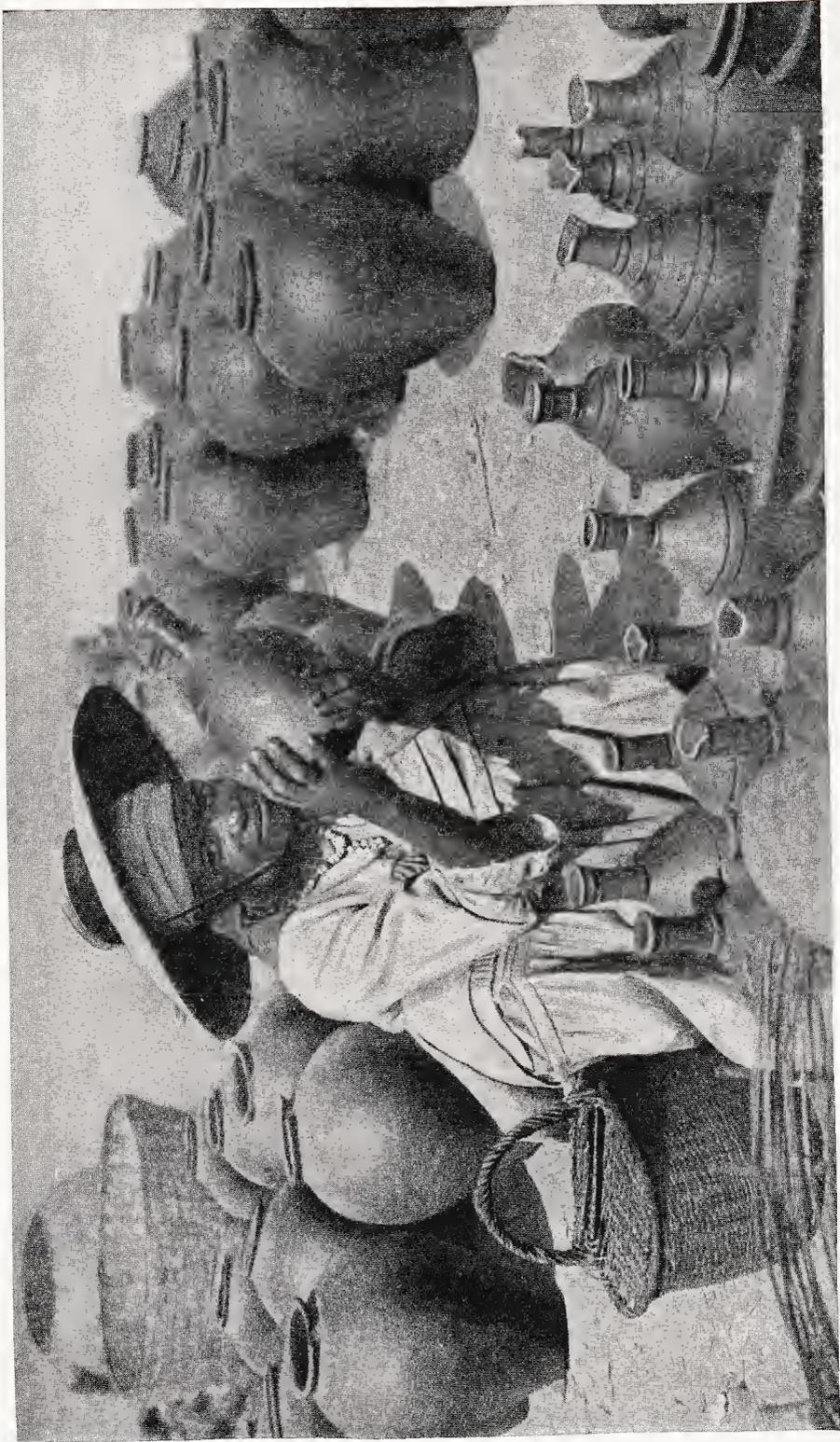
Few good roads; railways about 400 miles; 4,500 miles of telegraph lines, and 416 miles of telephone lines. Metric system in force. Currency of paper, nickel, and copper; the dollar or peso of 100 centavos of nominal value of 4s.

### Religion and Education

Education free and compulsory between the ages of six and fourteen. Government schools in 1920 numbered 1,334. University of Guatemala opened 1918. There are schools for arts and handicrafts and a national Conservatoire of music. Roman Catholicism prevalent, but there is complete religious toleration.

### Chief Towns

Guatemala (capital—population before earthquake, December 1917—January 1918, 90,000), Quetzaltenango (28,940), Coban (30,770), Totonicapam (28,300).



ADVERTISEMENT AND DISPLAY ON THE HARBOUR FRONT AT PORT AU PRINCE

Utensils of every shape, sort, and size are here for sale grouped in crowded plenty round the dusky saleswoman. The cluster of capacious urns in the background have an air of amplitude in their well-rounded outlines, and were designed to hold generous quantities. The construction of all this motley assemblage of household wares is simple and utilitarian, though it will be noticed that such ornamentation as has been attempted is varied in its execution. Shaded by her large-brimmed hat, this Haitian woman hopes to attract the undecided customer as well by her welcoming smile as by the soundness of her goods